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| Nota di contenuto | Front matter -- Contents -- Foreword -- Preface -- Acknowledgments -- Introduction: Ansky Visits Ludmir -- 1. A Dybbuk Trilogy, or How the Maiden of Ludmir Became a Literary Figure -- 2. Writing the Maiden -- 3. Afterlives: Remembering the Maiden -- 4. The Curse, the Cossacks, and the Messiah: Ludmir Before the Maiden -- 5. Birth and Childhood -- 6. Love and Death -- 7. The Maiden Possessed -- 8. False Male and Woman Rebbe? -- 9. The Witch-hunt in Ludmir -- 10. The Wedding and Its Aftermath -- 11. In the Holy Land -- Conclusion: Tracing the Maiden -- Afterword: Journey to Ludmir -- Notes -- Bibliography -- Index |
| Sommario/riassunto | Hannah Rochel Verbermacher, a Hasidic holy woman known as the Maiden of Ludmir, was born in early-nineteenth-century Russia and became famous as the only woman in the three-hundred-year history of Hasidism to function as a rebbe-or charismatic leader-in her own right. Nathaniel Deutsch follows the traces left by the Maiden in both |

history and legend to fully explore her fascinating story for the first time. The Maiden of Ludmir offers powerful insights into the Jewish mystical tradition, into the Maiden's place within it, and into the remarkable Jewish community of Ludmir. Her biography ultimately becomes a provocative meditation on the complex relationships between history and memory, Judaism and modernity. History first finds the Maiden in the eastern European town of Ludmir, venerated by her followers as a master of the Kabbalah, teacher, and visionary, and accused by her detractors of being possessed by a dybbuk, or evil spirit. Deutsch traces the Maiden's steps from Ludmir to Ottoman Palestine, where she eventually immigrated and re-established herself as a holy woman. While the Maiden's story-including her adamant refusal to marry-recalls the lives of holy women in other traditions, it also brings to light the largely unwritten history of early-modern Jewish women. To this day, her transgressive behavior, a challenge to traditional Jewish views of gender and sexuality, continues to inspire debate and, sometimes, censorship within the Jewish community.
